

Focus Group Questions & Responses

(February 25, 2005)

The information below represents the questions asked and the responses received from a February 25, 2005 focus group of ten Iowa tire dealers and tire distributors.

How can we encourage customers to leave their tires with the dealers?

- Customer should have to pay to keep the tires
- Distributor should charge dealer for disposal, then dealer charges customer - Customer won't pay to keep tires
- Fees - would reduce need for education
- Make fee mandatory like a bottle deposit (through state law)
- But state law would mean more paperwork for dealers

How can we distribute information on proper tire maintenance and disposal?

Maintenance

- Pamphlets in waiting area
- People throw away handouts
- Tell customer face-to-face
- Workshops had poor attendance

Disposal

- Word of mouth
- Some will ask what happens to tires
- Give out Greenman's phone number

How can we educate customers about maintenance and disposal of tires?

- Show posters of recycled products
- Make it simple
- Show negative consequences too - mosquitoes/ West Nile
- Brochure least effective
- Poster is something to read in waiting room- brochure would be thrown away
- Tabletop on counter, poster on wall, hang from ceiling

What are some problems of improper tire disposal?

- Problems not so bad now that free pickup days are gone
- The county finds 200-300 tires/year
- Illegal dumping at abandoned sites
- Problem is with individual customer
- Garbage trucks pick up tires from curb in some places, or take to recycling center for free
- About 25% take tires home
- Problem-unlicensed people taking scrap tires and not disposing of them properly: Need a hotline to report this
- Getting these people would make word spread quick
- Some very small body shops don't know that people taking scrap tires need to be licensed- these are people who need to be targeted
- Distributors need to know when selling tires that dealer has a place to dispose
- Somebody needs to be in control
- Illegal dumpers wouldn't care unless it saved them money
- Can't change illegal dumping habits unless \$ is involved
- Don't tell customer there's a disposal fee unless they ask
- Put responsibility on dealer and not customers
- Need to remove incentive for illegal dumping (taking tires home because of fee)

Who takes their tires home and why?

- Urban-very few taken home, more rural
- Pass down to kid, use on farm, wagon, don't want to pay fee, tire swings
- Need a universal fee on disposal (could be a problem with border towns)
- Most surrounding states have tire fees/taxes
- Dealers association historically against a tire tax

Should disposal fee be included in price?

- Don't want to collect a tax to send to the state
- Make everyone have same disposal cost integrated in price
- Would not show up on invoice?
- Disposal fee mandatory whether or not tires stay
- If its not listed separate, customer doesn't ask too many questions
- Would rather pay Greenman/recycler
- 'Are you going to charge me?'
- 'I have to charge you whether you leave it or not'
- Would dealers make deals if customer takes tires?

Would a set fee work?

- Might hurt competitive pricing from recyclers
- Would state pay recycling fees if there were a tax?

How many tires can your dealership store without a permit if you don't store scrap tires in a mobile container from a registered hauler?

- Answer 500
- Storage of junk tires:
- Should be less than 500
- But, truck couldn't come that often if storage limit was less than 500
- Storage container allows for more but can be more costly

How can dealers help recruit customers for a focus group?

- Via flyers
- But hard to get illegal dumping people to volunteer
- Do enforcement actions to make example of people
- Focus group won't tell you anything new, waste of time

Information and Suggestions for DNR to consider:

- Need to work through distributors
- Get people to pay disposal fee and not keep tires
- Cash and carry not a problem for most dealers
- People keep tires for county's free cleanup days to avoid fee
- Difference between urban and rural customers
- Don't give free disposal
- Poster on laws
- Ads in newspapers

Would passing out DNR information on proper tire maintenance and disposal help?**Maintenance**

- No-wouldn't read (like owners manual)
- Verbal is better

Disposal

- If it showed what it cost
- Show products made from recycled tires

How could DNR educate dealers on what happens to tires?

- Maybe a curiosity
- Dealers recycle anyway. They don't care what happens next